

MMR-Pre-Scribed Burn

January 2005

PKG: The area around Camp Edwards, Massachusetts is no stranger to fire. In fact, fire is vital to keeping the range in shape for Soldiers to train and maintaining the ecosystem. “Burn Boss”, Joel Carlson, says the impact to the environment if build up of the forest debris isn’t burned to remove potential fuel for forest fires.

SOT: Sgt. Joel Carlson/ Burn Boss, Mass National Guard: “We would lose a lot of rare plants and animals, a lot of globally rare plants and animals from a conservation perspective, would disappear.”

At first glance the charred forest looks as if it is only the remains of a pristine habitat, but give it a few weeks, the blackened forest will begin to blossom with bits of green and young vegetation. The removal of this vegetation is essential to providing the soldier with the opportunity to hone his skill in land navigation.

SOT: Col. Bernie Flynn/ Commander, Camp Edwards: “We’ve got 15-thousand acres of maneuver area here at Camp Edwards. It’s important for us that we do this.

The pre-scribed fires provide a healthy environment for the unique habitat, home to at least thirty-six state listed threatened species.

SOT: Col. Bernie Flynn/ Commander, Camp Edwards: “We need to train soldiers, to let soldiers know that they can train to standards and still be environmentally sound in everything they do”.

SOT: Lt. Col. Dave Cunha/ Dir. of Environmental Readiness Center, MMR:

The training area is important. Having good training area is even more important. What you need to do is take what you have and make sure you treat it well, so its here for the units that need to come and train 20, 30, 40, 50 years from now.

The Massachusetts National Guard Natural Resource program is clearing the way for our soldiers to receive the training they need to accomplish their mission. And when the smoke clears, Camp Edwards is a leader in pre-scribed ground fires, and is setting the standard in land management.

Jesse McGill, at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts.